

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 02357 280555Z

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ACTION OPR-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 /010 W
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R 280537Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7079
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 2357

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OGEN PFOR LA US TH
SUBJECT: BRAILLE WATCHES

REF A VIENTIANE 855 NOTAL, B STATE A-476, C STATE 081209

1. AS PROPOSED REF A, ON APRIL 19 EMBASSY SENT NOTE NO. 81 TO FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFERING TO PRESENT TO MINISTER OF HEALTH OR OTHER APPROPRIATE OFFICIAL SIX BRAILLE WRIST WATCHES DONATED BY ZALE CORPORATION PER REF B. WE ASKED IN OUR NOTE FOR MINISTRY'S VIEWS ON WHERE, WHEN, AND TO WHOM THESE WATCHES SHOULD BE DELIVERED. WE ALSO ENCLOSED WITH NOTE INSTRUCTIONS IN LAO ON HOW TO USE WATCHES.

2. MINISTRY NEVER REPLIED TO NOTE. ONE TWO SEPARATE OCCASIONS IN LAST THREE MONEHTS, EMBOFF HAS FOLLOWED UP WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY CHEF DE CABINET SOUBANH SRITHIRATH TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER LPDR PLANNED RESPOND TO OUR OFFER TO DONATE WATCHES TO NEEDLY BLIND LAO. SOUBANH IN JULY REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT THINK ILLITERATE BLIND LAO WOULD KNOW HOW TO USE WATCHES AND INDICATED THAT MINISTRY PLANNED MAKE NO FORMAL RESPONSE TO OUR NOTE.EMBOFF AGAIN ASKED HIM IN SEPTEMBER ABOUT WHETHER MINISTRY PLANNED RESPOND TO OUR NOTE TO WHICH HE REPLIED THAT HE HAD ALREADY GIVEN US ANSWER EARLIER.

3. IT IS THUS CLEAR TO US THAT MINISTRY DOES NOT WANT
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PAGE 02 VIENTI 02357 280555Z

TO ACCEPT THIS SMALL GESTURE OF PRIVATE AMERICAN "AID"

COMING THROUGH USG CHANNEL. WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND
THAT WE SEND SIX WATCHES ELSEWHERE, PROBABLY TO
BANGKOK IF THEY CAN BE USED THERE, PERHAPS BY THE
SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND.

4. REQUEST DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS AND ANY COMMENTS
BANGKOK MAY WISH TO MAKE ON WHETHER WATCHES COULD BE
PRESENTED IN THAILAND. WHEN WE SEND WATCHES ON I WILL
WRITE DONOR EXPLAINING CIRCUMSTANCES IN GENERAL PER
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